

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 /071 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 6438

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM PINT KS

SUBJ: KIM TAE-CHUNG STATES VIEWS IN WAKE OF FIRST RELEASE OF
EM-9 VIOLATORS

SUMMARY: ONE OF KIM TAE-CHUNG'S LAWYERS PREPARED A TRANSCRIPT OF A CONVERSATION WITH KIM IN CHINJU PRISON; GIVING KIM'S VIEWS ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES IN WAKE OF FIRST RELEASE OF EM-9 PRISONERS. KIM MAINTAINED CENTRAL ISSUE REMAINED BASIC ROKG POLICY, NOT RELEASE OF PRISONERS. HE CONSIDERED THAT HIS TREATMENT IN PRISON WAS GENERALLY ADEQUATE. HE PREFERRED TRANSFER TO A JAIL NEAR SEOUL, AND IMPLIED HE WOULD NOT COMPROMISE HIS PRINCIPLES TO OBTAIN HIS FREEDOM. KIM PRAISED PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES. END SUMMARY.

1. ONE OF KIM TAE-CHUNG'S SECRETARIES GAVE EMBOFF TRANSCRIPT OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN KIM AND LAWYER KIM KWANG-IL WHICH TOOK PLACE JULY 18 IN CHINJU PRISON. TRANSCRIPT APPARENTLY INTENDED TO PROVIDE PUBLIC WITH KIM'S VIEWS IN THIS PERIOD WHEN ROKG HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY TENTATIVELY GROPING TOWARD CHANGE. KIM'S STATEMENTS CONSISTENT BUT MORE CAREFULLY PHRASED AND GUARDED THAN INFORMAL REPORTS OF HIS VIEWS AS GIVEN BY ANOTHER SOURCE WHO HAD VISITED HIM IN SAME TIME FRAME.

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2. FULL TEXT OF DIALOGUE WILL BE FORWARDED BY AIRGRAM. THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES HIS REMARKS ON THREE TOPICS: KIM'S RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT CONDITIONAL RELEASE; HIS HEALTH AND CONDITIONS OF IMPRISONMENT; AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY.

3. CONDITIONAL RELEASE - LAWYER KIM KWANG-IL TOLD KIM TAE-CHUNG ABOUT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR LENIENCY

FOR EMERGENCY MEASURE PRISONERS, PROSECUTOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE FIRST GROUP OF PRISONERS RELEASED HAD BEHAVED WELL IN PRISON AND SHOWED REPENTANCE FOR THEIR MISDEEDS AND PUBLIC'S EXPECTATION THAT OTHERS INCLUDING KIM WOULD SOON BE RELEASED. KIM TAE-CHUNG REPLIED THAT IT IS UP TO THE GOVERNMENT TO DECIDE WHETHER TO RELEASE PEOPLE OR NOT. HE SAID HE WAS NOT INTERESTED IN HIS OWN RELEASE AND THAT HE WOULD MANAGE HIS SITUATION IN ACCORD WITH HIS CONSCIENCE. KIM BELITTLED SIGNIFICANCE OF ROKG GESTURE, SAYING RELEASE OF EM-9 VOLATORS MEANINGLESS UNLESS ROKG CHANGES POLICY. KIM SAID HUMAN RIGHTS STRUGGLE COULD NOT BE GIVEN UP, BUT EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO DIALOGUE WITH GOVERNMENT IN SPIRIT OF PATRIOTISM AND CONSCIENCE. COMMENT: KIM'S VIEWS CONVERGE WITH THOSE OF MOST INTRANSIGENT HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS, BUT HIS EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE WITH INCUMBENT ADMINISTRATION LEAVES DOOR OPEN FOR POSSIBLE ACCOMODATION IN FUTURE. ON THE OTHER HAND, ROKG NOT LIKELY TO ENHANCE KIM TAE-CHUNG'S STATURE BY "DIALOGUING" WITH HIM EXCEPT POSSIBLY INDIRECTLY OR THROUGH LOW LEVEL OFFICIALS.

4. KIM'S HEALTH AND CONDITIONS OF IMPRISONMENT - KIM SAID, "I DO NOT COMPLAIN ABOUT MY LIFE IN JAIL. I THINK IT IS A GOOD CHANCE FOR ME TO CULTIVATE MY CHARACTER, TO INCREASE MY FAITH IN GOD, TO READ AND TO ACQUIRE WISDOM TO DEAL WITH FUTURE TRIBULATIONS." HE DESCRIBED CONDITIONS IN PRISON AS MORE OR LESS ADEQUATE AND NOTED THAT TIME HE COULD RECEIVE MONTHLY VISITS FROM HIS FAMILY HAD BEEN INCREASED FROM FIVE MINUTES TO THIRTY MINUTES. TO A QUESTION ABOUT HIS HEALTH HE REPLIED THAT THE PRISON

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DOCTOR WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT HIS CONDITION. HE OBSERVED THAT HIS HEALTH HAD NOT IMPROVED, THAT HIS LEG STILL BOTHERED HIM AND THAT HE WAS HAVING MORE TROUBLE SHAKING COLDS THAN BEFORE. HE WAS SURE MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR HIM WOULD BE BETTER AT A PRISON NEAR SEOUL AND NOTED A 20 DAY DELAY IN GETTING MINOR DENTAL TREATMENT BECAUSE THE DENTIST HAD TO BE BROUGHT TO CHINJU FROM SEOUL. HE REITERATED HIS STRONG DESIRE TO BE TRANSFERRED TO A PRISON NEAR SEOUL SINCE HIS ELECTION LAW VIOLATION CASE WAS STILL PENDING THERE.

COMMENT: ANOTHER SOURCE IN THE KIM CAMPT TOLD EMBOFF THAT KIM TOLD ONE OF HIS LAWYERS THAT HIS HEALTH WAS GOOD AND THAT KIM FELT THAT, IF THE ROKG PLANNED TO LIMIT HIS ACTIVITIES UPON RELEASE, HE MIGHT JUST AS WELL STAY IN JAIL SINCE HE COULD DO NOTHING THERE AS WELL AS HE COULD DO NOTHING OUTSIDE.

5. PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY - KIM WELCOMED PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY WHICH HE SAID RESTORED PRINCIPLE TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. HE CAUTIONED LAWYER THAT CARTER POLICY WAS NOT AIMED AT FREEDOM OR SURVIVAL OF ANY INDIVIDUAL BUT AT PROMOTING NEW ERA WHERE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WAS EMPHASIZED. HE FELT TREND TOWARD GREATER DEMOCRACY WAS UNDER-

WAY WORLDWIDE AND WARNED THAT THE GOVERNMENT, RULING, AND OPPOSITION PARTIES IN KOREA HAS BETTER RELIZE THIS.

6. LOCAL MEDIA HAVE NOT MENTIONED TRANSCRIPT; HOWEVER, KIM'S SUPPORTERS HAVE REPRODUCED IT AND ARE APPARENTLY ATTEMPTING TO CIRCULATE BY HAND.
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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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